

AD-A240 412



2

**Regional Conflict and The Superiority of The  
Defense - Challenges For U.S. Operational Commanders**

**A Monograph  
by**

**Major Guillermo A. Rodriguez  
Military Intelligence**

**DTIC**  
**SELECTE**  
**S D D**  
**SEP 12 1991**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**Second Term 90-91**

*Approved for Public Release; Distribution Is Unlimited*

**91-10367**



# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE 10/5/91		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED MONOGRAPH	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Regional conflict and the Superiority of the Defense - Challenges For U.S. Operational Commanders				5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Major Guillermo Rodriguez, USA					
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED				12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)  See Attached					
14. SUBJECT TERMS OPERATIONAL ART, IRAN-IRAQ WAR, Falklands Conflict, Defense, Clausewitz, Desert Storm, Regional Conflict				15. NUMBER OF PAGES 51	
				16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED		

## ABSTRACT

### REGIONAL CONFLICT AND THE SUPERIORITY OF THE DEFENSE - CHALLENGES FOR U.S. OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS.

By Maj. Guillermo A. Rodriguez, USA, 51 pages.

Recent historical events such as the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and Operation Desert Storm indicate that we are entering a new era of geo-political struggle. The world is no longer dominated by a bipolar struggle between the United States and the USSR. In the new world order the U.S. finds itself in a leadership role within a multipolar community of nations. One outcome of this new world order may be the emergence of regional conflicts which might not have occurred in a bipolar world. A regional aggressor's use of the defense may pose unique challenges to a U.S. operational commander charged with deploying/employing offensive military power to secure or protect U.S. interests. This study will examine the doctrinal implications the defense would place on a U.S. operational commander's ability to deploy/employ military power to resolve regional conflict.

This study begins with a description of Clausewitz' theory of the superiority of the defense to clarify and explain Clausewitz' criteria. These criteria are: preservation of one's force, the advantages of time, position, surprise, and of counterattacking from interior lines. Clausewitz' criteria will be applied to historical case studies to determine how theory was applied in practice. The study then analyzes the findings to draw doctrinal implications about the defense as a strategy for Third World nations to secure regional goals. The analysis will conclude by providing doctrinal challenges which may affect the United States's conduct of operational art in the new world order.

This study highlights the difficulty of applying theory to practice -- particularly when the defense already presupposes weakness in the force adopting it. While the defense may, in the right hands and under the right circumstances, be the stronger form of war -- wars are still won by offensive action. Nonetheless, U.S. operational commanders will face formidable challenges for regional war. The implications drawn from this study suggest that a careful evaluation of current doctrine is required to ensure that it meets the challenges of the new world order.

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

Major Guillermo A. Rodriguez

Title of Monograph: Regional Conflict and the Superiority  
of the Defense - Challenges for U.S.  
Operational Commanders

Approved by:

Robert L. Barefield  
LTC. Robert L. Barefield, MPA.

Monograph Director

James R. McDonough  
Colonel James R. McDonough, MS.

Director, School of  
Advanced Military  
Studies

Philip J. Brookes  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

Director, Graduate  
Degree Program



Accepted this 10th day of May 1991

Accession For	
NTIS	CRA&I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC	TAB <input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced <input type="checkbox"/>	
Justification	
By	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Availability or Special
A-1	

## ABSTRACT

### REGIONAL CONFLICT AND THE SUPERIORITY OF THE DEFENSE - CHALLENGES FOR U.S. OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS.

By Maj. Guillermo A. Rodriguez, USA, 51 pages.

Recent historical events such as the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and Operation Desert Storm indicate that we are entering a new era of geo-political struggle. The world is no longer dominated by a bipolar struggle between the United States and the USSR. In the new world order the U.S. finds itself in a leadership role within a multipolar community of nations. One outcome of this new world order may be the emergence of regional conflicts which might not have occurred in a bipolar world. A regional aggressor's use of the defense may pose unique challenges to a U.S. operational commander charged with deploying/employing offensive military power to secure or protect U.S. interests. This study will examine the doctrinal implications the defense would place on a U.S. operational commander's ability to deploy/employ military power to resolve regional conflict.

This study begins with a description of Clausewitz' theory of the superiority of the defense to clarify and explain Clausewitz' criteria. These criteria are: preservation of one's force, the advantages of time, position, surprise, and of counterattacking from interior lines. Clausewitz' criteria will be applied to historical case studies to determine how theory was applied in practice. The study then analyzes the findings to draw doctrinal implications about the defense as a strategy for Third World nations to secure regional goals. The analysis will conclude by providing doctrinal challenges which may affect the United States's conduct of operational art in the new world order.

This study highlights the difficulty of applying theory to practice -- particularly when the defense already presupposes weakness in the force adopting it. While the defense may, in the right hands and under the right circumstances, be the stronger form of war -- wars are still won by offensive action. Nonetheless, U.S. operational commanders will face formidable challenges for regional war. The implications drawn from this study suggest that a careful evaluation of current doctrine is required to ensure that it meets the challenges of the new world order.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Stronger Form of War	3
The Falklands Conflict	9
Key Observations	18
The Iran-Iraq War	19
Key Observations	28
Desert Shield-Desert Storm	30
Key Observations	37
Doctrinal Implications/Conclusions	39
Endnotes	45
Bibliography	49

## INTRODUCTION

Going over to the defense... can be an intentional move; it is not necessarily associated with impotency, paralysis, resignation and hopelessness -- it can be dynamic and mobile... It may also be a planned path to victory.<sup>1</sup>

A general may, therefore, employ in his battles with equal success either the offensive or defensive system; but it is indispensable, -- 1st, that, so far from limiting himself to a passive defense, he should know how to take the offensive at favorable moments...<sup>2</sup>

Recent historical events, such as the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and Operation Desert Storm, indicate that we are entering a new era of geo-political struggle. The world is no longer dominated by a bipolar struggle between the United States and the USSR. In the new world order the U.S. finds itself in a leadership role within a multipolar community of nations. This is primarily because it is the only nation with the means to enforce international order or confront regional outlaws threatening U.S. interests, or those of our friends and allies. One outcome of this new world order may be the regionalization of warfare. Regional conflicts which might not have otherwise occurred in a bipolar world may become much more common. However, the balance of power among Third World nations may make unlimited war among them too costly.

An alternative may be to conduct limited warfare using the defense (following an initial assault to secure objectives) as a strategy for securing regional aims. A regional aggressor's use of the defense may pose unique challenges to a U.S. operational commander charged with deploying/employing

offensive military power to secure or protect U.S. interests. This study examines the doctrinal implications the defense might place on a U.S. operational commander's ability to use military power to resolve regional conflict.

The study's significance lies with the challenges we face today as we draw down our force structure and reduce our overseas presence. Regional wars will test the validity of our doctrine in all areas. From doctrine armed forces derive force structure, materiel, and training guidance. The doctrinal implications drawn from this study may help our army meet the challenges of the new world order.

I will begin with a description of Clausewitz' theory of the superiority of the defense to clarify and explain his criteria. These criteria are: preservation of one's force, the advantages of time, position, surprise, and of counterattacking from interior lines. Clausewitz' criteria will be applied to historical case studies to determine how theory was applied in practice. I will then analyze the findings to draw doctrinal implications about the defense as a strategy for Third World nations to secure regional goals. The analysis will conclude by providing doctrinal challenges which may affect the United States's conduct of operational art in the new world order.

My assumption for this study is that U.S. military power will be used in the future to confront conventional armies of Third World nations who are using the defense to secure regional aims. Because they lack combat power to defeat U.S. forces, they will use the defense to deter U.S. military



action, make its use costly, or to buy time for a political settlement.

Two case studies -- the Falklands Conflict and the Iran-Iraq war -- represent the types of regional wars we may confront in the future. In both cases the belligerent used the defense to secure its regional aims. Desert Storm is the first regional war in which we fought under the new world order. Initial observations from Desert Storm will impact the development of doctrinal implications relating to our future participation in regional warfare.

### The Stronger Form of War

In war many roads lead to success, and they do not all involve the opponent's outright defeat. They range from the destruction of the enemy's forces, the conquest of his territory, ...to projects with an immediate political purpose, and finally to passively awaiting the enemy's attacks. Any one of these may be used to overcome the enemy's will.<sup>3</sup>

In the history of major victories, wars were won by offensive action.<sup>4</sup> What then, is the purpose of the defense? Its purpose according to Clausewitz is preservation. The weaker opponent chooses the defense to preserve his force. Using its primary advantage, time in the form of waiting, the defender prepares his defense to meet the attacker on ground of his choosing. He then reduces the enemy force through combat, eventually establishing for himself a more favorable balance of force. Once the defender establishes the desired balance of force, he seeks to destroy the

aggressor by offensive action characterized by the counterattack. The defense sets the conditions for successful offensive action at reduced cost (men and materiel) to the defender.

Because of its inherent advantages, Clausewitz proposed that the defense is the stronger form of war. The natural course of war, he argued, "is to begin defensively and end by attacking."<sup>5</sup>

It is important to understand that the type of defense presented in this paper is not one characterized by a last ditch effort, hastily put together by a desperate force. The type defense Clausewitz conceived as the stronger form of war is one which is effected coolly, in full cognizance of the attacker's intent, with the aim of seizing the initiative once a better balance of force exists.<sup>6</sup> Clausewitz developed this theory during his study of past campaigns of great commanders.

He derived much of his theory of the defense from the campaigns of Frederick. Clausewitz found that a political plan dominated the Silesian wars (1740-1741). This plan consisted of seizing Silesia and then fighting a defensive campaign to await a favorable political settlement.<sup>7</sup> A similar intent will be noted by the defender in all three case studies. Similarly, in the Seven Years' War, Frederick had no intention of taking the offensive -- at least not during the final three years -- except when it served as better means for defense.<sup>8</sup>

Clausewitz proposed that the defense is the stronger form of war, but acknowledged it has a passive aim -- preservation.<sup>9</sup> The attack on the other hand has the positive aim -- conquest. However, Clausewitz argued, "if the attack were the stronger form, there would be no case for using the defensive, since its purpose is only passive."<sup>10</sup> So by settling for the limited goal of preservation the defender reaps the benefits of the defense.<sup>11</sup>

If, however, the defender feels he is not sufficiently strong to conduct a counter attack, he may seek a decision by a strategy of exhaustion. Clausewitz stated, "...the fatigue of the stronger has often brought about peace."<sup>12</sup> In large measure the Iranians were exhausted by the Iraqi's stubborn seven-year-long defense. Had casualties not been a major concern for the Iraqis, they may have won purely through exhaustion. However, during the final year they went into a counter-offensive and eventually won the war. This situation highlights another assertion by Clausewitz -- the relative exhaustion of both sides is a disadvantage for the defender if at some point he does not go over to the offense.<sup>13</sup>

Clausewitz described this point as the culminating point. Culmination is the moment when either an attack or defense risks overextending itself to the point where the attacker's initiative or defender's opportunity to take the initiative is lost.<sup>14</sup> The attacker's challenge is to plan his operation so that he will achieve his objective prior to reaching his culminating point. If his calculations prove incorrect, then the attacker risks overextending himself and may lose the

initiative. The defender also has a culminating point. He must plan his defense so that he wears down the enemy before he becomes worn down. At the point where it is no longer of benefit to remain on the defense, the defender should counterattack to seize the initiative and set the conditions to defeat the attacker. Both the attacker and the defender must determine how best to employ their means to achieve their objective without culminating.

The difficulty lies in determining the opponent's and one's own culminating points. Both commanders must depend on "discreet judgment" to prevent culmination.<sup>15</sup> The defender must use all the components of the defense wisely to achieve victory. As long as the defense's strength increases or remains constant while the attacker's diminishes, the absence of a decision is in the defender's best interest.<sup>16</sup>

If the defender does nothing, he simply delays the attacker from accomplishing the inevitable. That was the case in the Falklands conflict and certainly during the Desert Storm operation. Finally, Clausewitz pointed out that every attack that does not immediately lead to peace must end on the defensive.<sup>17</sup>

What are the advantages of the defense, and how do these advantages make the defense the stronger form of war? Time is the fundamental variable of the defense. This is the single element which Clausewitz said differentiates the defense from the attack. Time provides the defense its greatest advantage -- that of **waiting**. The defender seeks

time to strengthen his position to inflict more damage on the attacking force. The goal is to establish a better balance of force which will eventually set the conditions for a counterattack. Any omission of offensive action accrues to the defender's benefit.<sup>18</sup> Time gained by the defender plays against the attacker.

While the defense's greatest advantage is in waiting, it cannot succeed purely on this factor. The defense is composed of two distinct parts: waiting and acting. Waiting is such a fundamental feature of all warfare that war is hardly conceivable without it.<sup>19</sup> Yet, only by "acting through combat" can the attack be defeated. Every step the attacker makes leads to a loss of combat power. The soldiers progressively become more exhausted and find themselves in more danger.<sup>20</sup> Fear begins to wear down the enemy's will. The attack eventually stops from fear of defeat by the defender's forces.<sup>21</sup> This seems simple in theory; however, for the defense to be effective, it must draw on those factors which will give the commander a decisive advantage.

Clausewitz wrote that there are only three things which seem to produce decisive advantages: surprise, the benefit of terrain, and concentric attack.<sup>22</sup> Both the attacker and the defender share each of these to varying degrees. The attacker uses surprise by attacking at the time and place of his choosing. The defender benefits from surprise by his ability to counterattack along any point of his defense. Clausewitz argued that terrain is clearly to the defender's benefit.<sup>23</sup>

This point may be debatable in modern war -- Clausewitz did not foresee the advantages that air power, precision munitions, and long-range artillery would bring to both sides in warfare. Through a careful analysis of the terrain [read Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield], the defender can deduce the avenues of approach available to the attacker. This facilitates the defender's ability to determine where he can and should counterattack. As for the advantage of concentric attack, Clausewitz stated:

Once the defender decides to attack, the benefits of concentration and interior lines becomes a decisive one which is more likely as a rule to lead to victory than by a convergent pattern of attack.<sup>24</sup>

It follows that the key to mounting a successful counterattack is intelligence. Without it the defense is unable to identify the attacker's main effort, forcing a counterattack to commit indecisively. Clausewitz credits the defender's inability to acquire information through reconnaissance as the factor which allows the attacker to achieve surprise and use the concentric attack. Modern technology, however, gives the defender the means to acquire more timely and reliable information. Thus, with intelligence, the advantage of surprise and a counterattack from interior lines can be decisive.

The skillful use of preservation, time, position, surprise, and counterattack from interior lines can give the defender the decisive edge he seeks to establish a better balance of force to counterattack and regain the initiative.

We will apply Clausewitz' criteria to three regional wars -- The Falklands Conflict, the Iran-Iraq war, and Operation Desert Storm -- to draw observations which may provide insights on how operational commanders may approach similar conflicts in the future.

### The Falklands Conflict

The root cause of the Falklands Conflict is found in a its complicated history. Both countries have claimed the islands since the early 1700s. In 1982, the ruling Argentine military junta found itself with increasingly difficult domestic problems and very unpopular. To divert attention away from its domestic ills, the junta looked to the age-old dispute between the Argentines and British over the Falkland Islands. The junta renewed its effort to regain the islands -- focusing its efforts on a diplomatic solution. If diplomacy failed, the junta was prepared to take military action to seize the islands.

Following a short period of rising tensions between the two nations, Argentina invaded the Falklands on 2 April 1982. This was the beginning of the end for the Argentine gamble. The Argentines' basic assumption was that the British would not respond militarily to a rapid seizure of the islands. They where wrong. In reaction to British assertions that they would retake what was theirs, the Argentines issued orders for the defense of the islands from British attack.

An initial look at the situation in early April 1982

suggests that going on the defensive was the correct decision for Argentina. In terms of Clausewitz' criteria for the defense the Falklands offered significant advantages for the defender.

The most significant advantage lay in its geographic location -- what Clausewitz referred to as the advantage of position. The Falklands lay 8000 miles from Britain and 3750 miles from their nearest staging point at Ascension Island. Such a long line of communication (LOC) was a major vulnerability for the British. To a certain extent, long LOCs also affected the Argentines. Their mainland base was approximately 400 miles from the islands -- the extreme range for many of their aircraft. Additionally, Argentine resupply operations were virtually eliminated as a result of the British naval blockade.

The weather, which was approaching winter, gave Argentina an operational advantage. If they could have delayed British operations, the cruel antarctic weather would have seriously reduced Britain's ability to conduct military operations. As it was, weather took a heavy toll on both participants. Surprisingly, the Argentine infantrymen suffered the most because they were issued only summer clothing.<sup>25</sup> Although some Argentine units were well-trained, most had untrained conscripts with inadequate equipment. All units were poorly supplied.

Following the invasion, Britain responded immediately. By 16 April, the first elements of the Royal Navy Task Force



reached Ascension Island on their way to the Falklands. By 25 April, British forces retook South Georgia Island even though their main force was still 200 miles away. On 1 May, British forces were in position to begin planning and preparing an assault to regain the Falklands. On 21 May, British forces assaulted San Carlos to establish a bridgehead and proceed with ground operations to retake the Falklands.<sup>26</sup>

Up to this point much of the war was dominated by British naval and air operations in preparation for the ground assault. Argentina used its time to prepare defenses around Port Stanley and a few other points, such as Goose Green. While the Argentine force as a whole was on the defense, its Air Force aggressively took the war to the British. This supports Clausewitz' assertion that the defense is composed of two parts -- waiting and acting. He explained that, particularly in campaigns and large operations, each is not a pure act :- "rather the defense alternates between the two conditions, so that waiting may run like a continuous thread through the whole period of the defense."<sup>27</sup> The Argentines, however, should not receive any credit for deliberate operational thought since the action by the Air Force was an independent initiative rather than a well-planned operational design.

The air war in the Falklands was characterized by offensive Argentine attacks on British naval assets. The Argentines held a numerical superiority in fighter aircraft of approximately 6 to 1.<sup>28</sup> British Harrier aircraft and navy ships were primarily used for force protection throughout

most of the conflict. The bombs and missiles employed by the Argentine Air Force produced significant damage to the British Navy. On 24 May, Her Majesty's Ship (HMS) Antelope was sunk by one of two 1000-lb. bombs which hit it and lodged in the engine room, subsequently exploding the following day. By 24 May, 10 British ships were damaged or sunk Argentine bombs. On 25 May, the HMS Atlantic Conveyor was sunk by an Argentine Exocet missile. Significantly, three British CH-47 Chinook helicopters, which were to have played a major role in the attack on Port Stanley, were destroyed.<sup>29</sup> While the press played up the use of the Exocet missiles, only two ships were sunk as a result of five firings.<sup>30</sup> The greater portion of damage from air strikes resulted from 1000-lb bombs. On 12 June, a land-launched Exocet damaged the HMS Glamorgan. Only about 20 percent of the Argentine bombs which hit actually exploded. The war may have turned out quite differently had the other bombs not malfunctioned or been modified to explode on contact.

While the Argentine Air Force caused considerable damage, a major failure was its inability to acquire and target British troop transports and the two aircraft carriers. This was because the Argentine air strikes lacked operational focus. The Air Force contribution was tactical, with attrition as its apparent objective.<sup>31</sup> The British center of gravity was its aircraft carriers. Without them air superiority would have belonged to Argentina. Additionally, the loss of an aircraft carrier would have created a major

strategic set-back to the British.<sup>32</sup> The Argentine Air Force did not attack the aircraft carriers because they were on the east side of the Falklands and out of range. The Argentines, however, had sufficient time to improve the runway at Port Stanley, which would have put their aircraft in range.

During the conflict, Argentina lost approximately 102 aircraft and the British lost thirty four.<sup>33</sup> As the only service which clearly made a concerted effort at warfighting, the Argentine Air Force fought with great courage and determination. A number of factors hindered more favorable results for Argentina.

To begin with, Argentina had not trained for nor did it plan to conduct offensive operations at sea.<sup>34</sup> Argentina lacked joint doctrine, and inter-service rivalry prevented any cooperation among the services. In fact the Navy, who was the prime architect of the invasion, refused to play an active role in the conflict -- citing defense of the mainland as its reason.<sup>35</sup> Operationally, Argentina lacked the capability to synchronize and concentrate its attacks. Its aircraft lacked the range to engage the Harriers and the Argentine bombs were unreliable. A greater number of Exocet missiles and launch aircraft were needed. Had any one or more of these limitations not existed, the outcome of the war may have been different.<sup>36</sup> The Argentine Air Force's performance in anti-ship attacks was indicative of the type of imagination, improvisation, and adaptability of a Third World nation to unforeseen conditions.

The British did well with few aircraft (34 Harriers).

This suggests the ability to adjust to take advantage of enemy weakness and an aggressive approach to contingency operations. Unlike the Argentines, the British understood the value of forward basing. Once they took the airfield at Port Stanley, the British lengthened its runway.

In addition to position, time favored the defense. The Argentines had six weeks to prepare their island defenses. However, they failed to adequately plan for this contingency prior to invading the Falklands. Time was also critical to the British. The more time they used to prepare for the invasion, the more time was available to the Argentines to improve their defenses. The Argentines did not fully exploit this advantage during the six weeks prior to the British arrival.

The Argentines used available time to lay between 15 to 30 thousand mines. They mined selected key terrain and laid smart mines (which discriminate between small craft and warships) on the approaches to Port Stanley, based on their assumptions of where the British would attack. Instead, the British landings took place at San Carlos -- rendering the mines at Port Stanley ineffective. Again their doctrine was lacking -- or not followed -- as gaps existed at various defensive sites and many where not covered by fire.<sup>37</sup>

Because of their low cost and ease of employment, mines have the potential -- if used in large numbers -- to dramatically slow down or halt an attack. Third World countries lacking skill in maneuver warfare can benefit from mines by

integrating them into their defense. Mines are an inexpensive way for the defender to fix a force in order to counter-attack. This will be noted again during the Iran-Iraq War.

In addition to mines, the order was given to increase the levels of supplies on the island; yet the British naval blockade prevented effective resupply operations. Troop levels were not increased nor was there any indication that Argentina conducted training during the six weeks the British sailed south. The Argentines could have done more to improve their defense.

For example, the distance of the Falkland Islands from Argentina (400 miles) placed many of their aircraft at their maximum fuel capacity. A possible solution could have been to lengthen the runway on one of the islands. This would have facilitated air operations in support of ground forces and put the carriers east of the Falklands within range of Argentine aircraft. Had the Argentines conducted air operations out of Port Stanley, they might have defeated the British invasion. The increased risk might have caused the British to seek a political solution.<sup>38</sup> Without air support Argentine ground forces were prey for British air support.

A number of Argentine units prepared strong defensive positions. For example, during the advance on Port Stanley the British faced 33 Argentine company-sized units dug into positions in nearby mountains.<sup>39</sup> This required British infantrymen to storm trenches using hand-to-hand combat to defeat the enemy. Unfortunately for the Argentines, once their first layer of defenses was punctured, their will to

resist dropped significantly. In effect, the British advance on Port Stanley was unopposed as the Argentines failed to exploit their advantage of position.

The Argentine's use of an active defense in depth would have come closer to Clausewitz' theoretical design, serving to delay the British advance. An active defense across 50 miles of wasteland would have slowed down the British ground force advancing on Port Stanley. A successful active defense might have also delayed the British long enough to increase the odds of winter setting in.<sup>40</sup> The Argentine's decision not to counterattack, but to sit and wait for the British attack, was contrary to Clausewitz' proposition that the defense consists not just in waiting -- but also in acting.<sup>41</sup> Without wearing away at the British through aggressive patrolling and counterattacks, it was just a matter of time before the attacker would defeat the Argentines.

Well-prepared defenses, deep bunkers, protected firing positions, mines, and pre-surveyed fire lines covered with heavy machine guns and mortars proved to be advantages for Argentina during the British attacks. The bunkers were totally immune to British air support, naval gun fire, and artillery.<sup>42</sup>

The Argentine ground forces -- with air and naval support -- had the capability to counterattack and possibly even launch an operational level counter-offensive. They lacked, however, the will to do so. In fact, the Argentines had numerous night vision goggles while the British had but a

handful. Properly used, they could have facilitated night target acquisition, thereby stopping or slowing down the British assault.

Thus, two key ingredients of Clausewitz' theory of defense -- surprise and concentric counterattack -- were not employed. Based on their advantage of position and time, the Argentines could have counterattacked, particularly at night, had the will existed. The islands offered few beaches suitable for amphibious landings. Argentina could have brought sufficient troops to cover the most likely beaches. With a credible counterattack force, they could have countered any amphibious assault.

A viable doctrine, trained troops, and aggressive leadership were key elements missing from the defensive equation. The Argentine ineffectiveness was compounded by having poorly equipped and clothed conscripts, poor C<sup>3</sup>, and the failure to make better use of time and terrain to complete 360 degree defenses of Port Stanley.

Both participants had advanced technology, yet for a number of reasons no one weapons system proved decisive. Rather as Anthony Cordesman said:

...the war consisted of unique episodic encounters [my emphasis] between forces organized and trained for other missions. In many cases the outcome of the encounter might have been reversed by a single hit or bomb, minor shifts in weather, or the command decisions of small units and forces.<sup>43</sup>

The Argentines had greater manpower, weapons superiority, and the advantages of the defense.<sup>44</sup> It follows that, at least in the Falklands, technology alone does not decide

wars. In general, the Argentine failure resulted from the lack of competent and aggressive officers, a warfighting doctrine more suited to internal defense and security, inter-service rivalry, and most importantly, the lack of will.

The potential to successfully apply Clausewitz' criteria for the defense existed, it was just not employed. During their planning for this operation, the Argentines could have made detailed defensive plans to defeat the British should they decide to fight. The terrain and time available were clearly to the Argentine's advantage. Thus having advantages in warfare presupposes one is capable of recognizing them, has the capability to exploit them, and has the will to do so. As a minimum the Argentines lacked the will.

#### **Key Observations of the Falklands Conflict**

- a. The superiority of the defense was not exploited to its full potential by the Argentines. The primary reasons were lack of will, inappropriate doctrine, poor leadership, and inter-service rivalry.
- b. Both participants lacked a well thought-out operational design. Innovation and improvisation drove much of the operations.
- c. Technology could have decided the war for either participant. However, superior British training, readiness, and leadership, at all levels, decided the outcome.
- d. The British use of a unified command and joint operations helped to overcome numerous unforeseen challenges. Argenti-



na's total lack of joint operations and cooperation created severe setbacks.

e. The morale and will of a fighting force is critical to sustained operations. This requires a sound warfighting doctrine, competent leadership, and superior training.

f. Air superiority is essential for a Third World nation to succeed in the operational defense. It provides freedom of action to the ground force.

### The Iran-Iraq War

The Iran-Iraq War was a regional war where the aggressor used the defense as its primary warfighting strategy. The Iran-Iraq War is an excellent example of how Third World tensions can erupt and threaten the international community -- primarily in economic terms.<sup>45</sup>

Several reasons exist to explain the cause of the war. Some examples are religion, Arab-Persian conflict, and geographic disputes. None of these were of any major significance -- except religion and then only after the Ayatollah Khomeini's rise to power.<sup>46</sup> The main reason for the war was the quest for regional power and dominance. The Iran-Iraq War was primarily a conflict between the goals of Ba'athist leadership represented by Iraq's Saddam Hussein and the religious challenge brought about by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini.

In 1979, the character of the historic rivalry between

these two nations changed with the Iranian revolution. The revolution left in place the Ayatollah Khomeini, who believed he had divine inspiration to broaden the Islamic revolution. He saw Iraq's Ba'ath regime as threatening to his broad vision of regional influence based on religious fundamentalism.<sup>47</sup> Saddam Hussein took advantage of the perceived potential advantage offered by the disarray in Iran to attack Iran and become the leader of the Arab world and the anti-Israeli movement.

During 1980, relations between the two nations continued to deteriorate. On 6 September 1980, Iraq threatened to seize 350 square kilometers of Iranian territory not transferred to Iraq as agreed under the 1975 Algiers Accord.<sup>48</sup> When Iran refused, Iraq followed through on its threat.

Iraq's aims for its invasion of Iran are not clear. Cordesman and Wagner in their book "The Lessons of Modern Warfare," provide a good analysis of Iraq's intentions to include the possibility of a "defensive invasion" as a reaction to the border clashes in September 1980. Israel took similar action in 1967 by conducting a preemptive attack against its Arab neighbors.<sup>49</sup> My research revealed that no comprehensive strategic plan existed. All writings indicate that Iraq saw a quick decisive victory result from its invasion of Iran.

After Iraq's initial gains, the Iranians went on the counter-offensive. Over a series of attacks, the Iranians were successful in retaking much of their lost territory. By November 1982, Iraq found itself on the operational defense.

Strategically and operationally for the following six years Iraq focused on fighting off Iranian attacks. The character and quality of its defense matured over the years making the defense "the stronger form of war," in this particular conflict. Such was its success that a nation of 17 million survived and eventually achieved victory against a nation of 47 million. We will now examine how the Iraqi's use of the stronger form of war fared within the scope of Clausewitz' criteria for the defense.

Initially, Iraq used a strategy of static defense to preserve its territorial gains. Using a static defense, however, prevented Iraqi commanders from exploiting the mobility of their armor for maneuver warfare. For example, during the battle of Khorramshara, the Iraqi military fortified the city and affected a ring defense. The Iranians attacked using human wave assaults, resulting in massive casualties for both sides. Nonetheless, the Iraqis fought well and, had they used maneuver against the Iranians, might have defeated the assault.<sup>50</sup> As it turned out, the Iranians penetrated the defenses and, after a few days of bloody street fighting, defeated the Iraqis. This poor defensive performance continued up to 1982.

Although poor training and leadership contributed to Iraq's defensive failures, its primary cause was Saddam Hussein's interference. By his orders to defend every inch of terrain and to defend militarily insignificant cities, such as Khorramsharar, he prevented his commanders from fully

exploiting the advantages of the defense. During 1982 to 1984, Iraq learned from its mistakes and made numerous improvements to its defenses.

The popular army was purged of incompetent commanders. Also, corps commanders, although still on a tight reign, had greater latitude to plan and execute operations.<sup>51</sup> They created a line of massive earth berms along the border, east of Iraq's north-south roads. Tanks were dug in, and mortars, minefields, barbed wire, and anti-aircraft guns (for use against attacking infantry) were integrated into their defenses.<sup>52</sup> The immensity of these defenses was highlighted by Iranian claims that Iraq laid over 800,000 mines. Edgar O'Ballance commented that once this type of defensive system begins, they tend to grow and expand, replacing a war's mobility and offensive character by a defensive attitude.<sup>53</sup>

Yet, these improvements began to pay off as Iran started a major offensive, Operation Ramadan, on 12 July 1982. During the operation, the Iranians conducted five human wave assaults. The Iraqis held each attack with their defenses or counterattacks.<sup>54</sup>

During 1984, Iran changed its land strategy from frontal assaults to attrition. It conducted limited attacks only to secure terrain objectives near the border.<sup>55</sup> Iraq countered these moves by continual improvement and enlargement of its defenses, logistics, and cross-reinforcement capability. Replacing materiel losses also became a major concern for both sides. Iraq benefited from United States and Soviet support. Iran, although it had no foreign debt, found it

difficult to acquire replacement parts from the international community.<sup>56</sup>

With all the above improvements, Iraq responded to Iranian attacks with a few counterattacks -- although they were limited in scope. Iraq had yet to develop fully its ability to exploit its counterattacks.<sup>57</sup> Cordesman and Wagner observed that in recent wars, the nations involved had great difficulty in conducting combined arms operations and maneuver warfare.<sup>58</sup> Iraq sat behind its defenses, hoping to influence the outcome of the war politically by inflicting massive casualties. Clausewitz would characterize this strategy as one of using the advantages of the defense to obtain a decision through exhaustion, rather than by a decisive counterattack.<sup>59</sup>

Towards the end of 1984, the war's prosecution showed little progress. Iran regained much of its territory, yet was unable to pursue an effective offensive. Cordesman and Wagner pointed out that Iraq concluded its basic strategy and tactics were correct. The Iraqis believed that they could still rely on technology, limited counteroffensives, and fixed defenses to accomplish their aims.<sup>60</sup>

This strategy, however, exacted a high price during the following four years. A series of "Iranian final offensives" claimed many Iraqi casualties. Lack of an Iraqi infantry assault and infiltration capability, as well as the inability to use armor effectively in counterattacks, contributed to the high casualties.<sup>61</sup> Command and control was a major

challenge for both sides. Inexperience and lack of training in peacetime were major contributors to poor C<sup>2</sup>. The Iraqi solution was centralized control and execution of very simple operations. Headquarters were rarely mobile. Brigades were used interchangeably between various headquarters. For example, during 1985, the Iraqis used eight division headquarters in fixed locations and manipulated 25 brigades among them to defeat an Iranian offensive.<sup>62</sup> Although successful, the Iraqis saw the need to develop a powerful counterattack force with adequate C<sup>2</sup> to facilitate limited exploitation of successful counterattacks. As for technology, the Iraqis had great difficulty integrating it into their force.

As a result, Iraq built up its force, in particular its Presidential or Republican Guard. A heavy influx of Soviet arms in 1984 permitted the Iraqis to begin to develop more mobile and flexible defensive tactics. By 1986, Iraq had developed a counterattack force totaling approximately 25,000.<sup>63</sup> By 1987, their defensive tactics evolved and were well-developed.

Essentially, the Iraqis based their defense on the assumption that the Iranian's superiority in numbers would result in a limited breakthrough. The Iraqis would then attempt to contain the breakthrough and canalize it. Behind the main defensive line, numerous earthmovers would create successive embankments and transporters would bring forward tanks. Meanwhile, Iraqi air power and artillery would cut off the Iranians from their supplies and reinforcements. Then, Iraqi armor and mechanized units would counterattack

the Iranian's exposed flanks.<sup>64</sup> This mobile defense strategy was more in line with Clausewitz' concept of the defense. Using the advantages of waiting, terrain, and counterattack, the Iraqis successfully defeated or fought off numerous Iranian offensives.

How well did the Iraqis effect the defense, when judged against Clausewitz' criteria for the defense? To begin with, the theoretical purpose of the defense, preservation, was clearly on Saddam Hussein's mind as he shifted to and maintained a defensive posture up to the last year of the war. Casualty reduction was a major concern for both nations, yet critical to Iraq which had a much smaller population. High casualties could place Saddam Hussein's political power at risk. While Hussein used a strategy of exhaustion with good results, increasing numbers of casualties forced him to take offensive action during 1989. These Iraqi counter-offensives defeated Iran's army and led to a United Nations cease fire.<sup>65</sup>

Iraq used time -- the fundamental variable of the defense -- very well. For example, the formidable defenses built up around Basra had been in continual development since 1981. By 1986, when the Iranians attacked, the fortifications at Basra consisted of five to six defensive rings.<sup>66</sup> Saddam Hussein used time to acquire weapons which gave him the advantage in numbers, and in some areas, advanced technology. Time was also used to build roads and water barriers. Additionally, Iraq increased the number of trucks and tank trans-

porters from 1000 to 1500.<sup>67</sup> The advantage of waiting -- which time provides -- was used well by Iraq. Once they fully developed their defenses, they waited for the numerous "final offensives" and defeated them through the advantages of the defense and combined arms tactics.

The Iraqi Army used the advantages of position well in their defensive operations. Most of the war took place along the Iran-Iraq border. There the terrain was conducive to defensive operations. By November 1982, the Iraqi defenses matured into a formidable challenge to Iranian attacks. Iraq prepared a long World War I type defensive trench system to deny Iran even a square inch of its territory.<sup>68</sup>

Counterattacks were consistently executed during most operations with surprising skill -- given such poor past performance with mobile operations. During Operation Ramadan, the Iranians attacked Iraqi defenses with four divisions. After making their way through the minefields, they attacked with human waves, penetrating ten miles before they were stopped by the Iraqi inner defenses. The next day the Iraqis counterattacked on both of the Iranian's exposed flanks with two divisions on each side. The counterattack pushed the Iranians back ten miles.<sup>69</sup>

Even though many of the Iraqi counterattacks consisted of two or more divisions, they were very limited in scope and unable to take advantage of Iranian mistakes. Iraqi intelligence provided little assistance to operational commanders due to its highly politicized nature. The Iraqis received some third country intelligence (primarily satellite), howev-



er there are no indications that they were able to fully exploit it operationally. The war was thus a visual range war, which made it difficult for the Iraqis to react to Iranian assaults.<sup>70</sup> The Iraqi commanders simply lacked the skill to exploit successful counterattacks. As a whole, however, they caused many Iranian casualties (30,000 - 50,000 KIA), and forced the Iranians to adopt another strategy.

Throughout the war, Iraq continued to improve its ability to fight offensively by building up its combat power and capability. The international community, however, never believed Iraq could retake the initiative, much less become the victor. As it turned out, Iraq steadily improved in experience and professionalism. It assessed, as early as 1984, that it would probably not survive a defensive war of attrition. This factor forced Iraq to reorganize and train selected units, particularly its Republican Guard. Iraq used the Republican Guard to develop a limited capability to exploit counterattacks or mount limited counter-offensives.<sup>71</sup>

The timing, location, and size of their counterattacks created surprise. Several Iraqi counterattacks consisted of two to five divisions. Once the enemy was held in place or fixed, the Iraqis would attempt an envelopment to try to destroy the trapped Iranian forces. The Iraqi's inability to use maneuver effectively prevented these envelopments from being fully successful. At best the Iraqis displayed a crude attempt at operational maneuver, which was greatly assisted by an incompetent enemy force.

Throughout the war, Iranian offensives, although large in numbers, only produced tactical victories. They never led to strategic success.<sup>72</sup> Defensive victories did, however, produce some significant strategic successes for Saddam Hussein.<sup>73</sup> The various offensives initiated by Iraq during 1988 created considerable pressure on Iran. By 1988, Iraq drove Iran out of most of its territorial gains.<sup>74</sup> These offensives, coupled with the use of chemicals and Iran's inability to reconstitute combat power, led to a United Nations sponsored cease fire -- called for by Saddam Hussein. Thus, Iraq applied Clausewitz' theory of the defense well, in relation to the force they faced. While their "victory" was by no means their initial invasion aims, Iraq preserved their territorial integrity and forced the Iranians to accept the U.N. cease fire. Time and will were the critical elements of the defense's success. Saddam Hussein imposed his will on his military and used the six years to progressively gain strength. The shortcomings of the Iranian military also contributed to Iraq's ability to apply all the advantages of the defense.

#### Key Observations of The Iran-Iraq War

- a. As with the Falklands, Iraqi military commanders did not seem to comprehend the importance of combined arms or joint doctrine.
- b. Time was well used throughout the war by the Iraqis. They continually improved and expanded their defenses, making

them much more costly to overcome. Iraqi air superiority permitted improvements to the defenses.

c. The inability to conduct even limited maneuver warfare was a major vulnerability of both nations.

d. Command and control of major formations proved difficult for both sides.

e. The will of the leadership and the morale of the troops were critical to success. These are vulnerabilities of many Third World nations and should be a major target for contingency forces.

f. Air superiority was essential to maintaining freedom of maneuver.

g. Third World nations' ability to sustain themselves is one of their major vulnerabilities. Sustainment of large forces is a difficult enterprise. A workable doctrine, C<sup>3</sup>, and a sound organizational structure are needed. Many Third World countries lack the resources, industrial base, or simply do not train sufficiently to provide maneuver forces with adequate sustainment.

h. Both countries' inability to acquire intelligence was a vulnerability. This fact has implications to deception and psychological operations doctrine.

i. Iraq's (as well as the Argentine's) reliance on extensive minefields and fortifications requires a doctrinal review to ensure U.S. obstacle operations are adequate.

j. Sound doctrine applied by a well-trained, professional military organization, under competent leadership, is more

decisive than technology. Technology is important because it gives the user the qualitative edge he needs to defeat his adversary. Yet, in the hands of ill-trained, poorly-led troops, technology becomes, at best, a hindrance to an opposing force.

k. Protracted warfare is not a characteristic unique to low intensity conflict. If a decisive victory is not achieved quickly, countries may resort to protracted conventional operations with limited aims to defeat their opponent through exhaustion or international mediation.

#### DESERT SHIELD - DESERT STORM

On 2 August 1990, Iraq -- only one year after it ended an 8 year war with Iran -- invaded Kuwait. Thus began what Harry Summers characterized as "one of the greatest strategic miscalculations in history, ranking with Adolf Hitler's invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941."<sup>75</sup> The new world order received its first challenge.

The world watched in anticipation as Saddam Hussein massed his forces on the Saudi Arabian border. On 7 August, at the request of the Saudi Arabian government, American military power was introduced into the Kuwait theater of operations (KTO). Whether by design or miscalculation, Iraq shifted to a defensive strategy. Why was Saddam Hussein unable to use the stronger form of war? Why did he not attack during the first few months when coalition forces were weak defensively?

Saddam Hussein was not without choices. When he attacked Kuwait, he did so with overwhelming combat power. Had he continued into Saudi Arabia or even onward to Israel there would have been a different war. Yet, for whatever reason, he choose to stay and hold on to Kuwait. Within five days of his invasion, U.S. ground forces of the 82d Airborne Division were on the sands of Saudi Arabia demonstrating U.S. resolve. This action internationalized a regional conflict and placed Saddam Hussein against a coalition led by a superpower. Had he attacked the small American force, Saddam Hussein could have easily destroyed it. He would have also killed Americans -- a major difference. He chose instead to use a strategy of defense (as in the Iran-Iraq war) in the hopes of defeating the United States strategically by attacking our national will and the fragile multinational coalition bond. He failed.

The nature of the Iraqi failure was astonishing! The fourth largest military power was destroyed in 47 days -- of which only one hundred hours consisted of ground combat operations. What does this suggest of Clausewitz' theory of the defense, particularly since Iraq successfully used the defense against Iran not more than a year prior to this conflict?

The theoretical purpose of the defense is preservation. Clearly, Saddam Hussein intended to preserve and hold on to Kuwait. To do so, he established what appeared to the coalition and the world, to be an extremely formidable defense within the Kuwaiti theater of operations. He attempted to

draw support from the Arab world by characterizing the situation as an Arab-American struggle. Additionally, he threatened to use terrorism against the United States. His challenge, however, was to apply the advantages the defense offers to force a decision.

Time, the fundamental variable, was on Iraq's side. The U.S. could not deploy sufficient combat power rapidly enough to defend against an Iraqi invasion, much less attack to retake Kuwait. With time, Iraq created an elaborate echeloned defense which called for increasingly larger U.S. forces to meet the challenge. Thus, the first effect of time was an advantage to Iraq. Our inability to rapidly deploy military power into the theater led to further escalation of combat power to establish a better balance of forces. Time unused by the attacker, as Clausewitz stated, accumulates to the defender's advantage. Time, however, was also on the United State's side. From August 1990 to January 1991, the U.S.-led coalition also maintained a defensive posture to preserve its force, deter further Iraqi aggression, and build up sufficient combat power to enable the coalition to take the offensive -- if directed to do so.

A major challenge for Iraq was how to exploit the advantage of position. The value of terrain for defense is directly related to the defender's understanding of both his and the attacker's capabilities to wage war on a set piece of geography. Iraq's position offered a "large sandbox" to organize his defense. It lacked depth being flanked on the

east by the Persian Gulf and to the rear by Iran. Saddam Hussein elected to construct an echeloned defense similar to the Soviets. Behind his first line of troops and fortifications lay an operational reserve, followed by his strategic reserve -- the Republican Guard force -- further north.

In terms of capability, this defense offered the flexibility to counterattack in different directions, to include the coast against an amphibious assault. The overall intent of the Iraqi defense was to impose its battlefield framework upon the coalition by forcing a frontal assault to inflict massive U.S. casualties. Saddam Hussein believed this would force a negotiated settlement in his favor. His error was to assume that the U.S. would accept battle on his terms.

This highlights a major weakness of many Third World nations -- the inability to assess (through intelligence means) the capabilities of its potential enemy and to structure viable contingencies to defeat them. This weakness is also a limitation to determining when to counterattack. After the air campaign began, Iraq was without an Air Force, or for that matter much else, to enable the commanders to "see the battlefield." This situation was a complete reversal from the Iran-Iraq War, in which the Iraqis had air superiority and also received some intelligence from third countries.

For Iraq another interesting and probably unique situation developed. Iraq was given six months to strengthen its defenses, since the U.S. led coalition lacked sufficient combat power to take the offensive. This situation permitted

the Iraqi defense to fulfill its theoretical purpose (establish a better balance of force) in the first two or three months. By the third month, the Iraqi defense reached its culminating point without receiving offensive action. It culminated because it reached the point, in relation to the coalition, where remaining on the defense did not provide any greater advantages than if it took the counter-offensive. By staying on the defense, the Iraqis lost the opportunity to regain the initiative and prevent the coalition from getting stronger. Jomini stated;

An army is reduced to the defensive only by reverses or by a positive inferiority. It then...seeks the means of restoring equality by multiplying obstacles in the way of the enemy. This plan, when not carried to an extreme, promises many chances of success,...he must not remain in his positions to receive whatever blows may be given by his adversary; he must, on the contrary, redouble his activity, and be constantly upon the alert to improve his opportunities of assailing the weak points of the enemy. This plan of war may be called the defensive-offensive, and may have strategical as well as tactical advantages.<sup>76</sup>

Saddam Hussein should have seized the initiative by attacking the coalition to seek a rapid decision. Why he did not attack will probably never be known, nor is it now of great significance. Iraq failed to follow through with Clausewitz' criteria for the defense by not combining acting with waiting.

The importance of this observation is that the training of a nation's military leadership in the art and science of warfare at the operational level of war is of immeasurable value. We know Saddam Hussein had a significant capability



in sheer numbers of key weapons systems and technology. Yet, technology is of little value if its leadership cannot integrate it into its doctrine and synchronize its employment with other battlefield systems toward one aim -- the destruction of the enemy's center of gravity. Even though he chose to remain in defensive positions, he might have better maneuvered some of his forces to check the possible courses of action open to the U.S.-led coalition. This would have been an easy and relatively low risk option for Saddam Hussein since he was provided most of the courses of action available to the U.S.-led coalition along with a complete analysis of each by the news media. He, more than any other enemy we have faced in our history, benefited from an "extended general staff."

This "general staff" consisted of military analysts such as Anthony Cordesman, James Blackwell, the newspapers, and magazines -- in short, our entire news media. While not a problem during this war, sensitive information provided by this extended staff may impact significantly in the hands of a more skilled and aggressive adversary. Saddam Hussein's failure to utilize such valuable analysis contributed to his forfeiting the defense's advantages of surprise and counter-attack from interior lines.

Once the U.S.-led coalition initiated the ground portion of their campaign plan, Iraq had the advantage of surprise through counterattack from interior lines. There was, however, no major coordinated counterattack. Both Iraq's operational reserve and the Republican Guard allowed themselves to

become victim to over forty days of continuous and intensive bombardment to its positions and LOCs. Additionally, the destruction of Iraq's C<sup>3</sup>I (command, control, communication, and intelligence) prevented any coordinated reaction. This resulted in the Republican Guard units being taken by surprise. Without any air reconnaissance, neither Baghdad nor the Republican Guard knew where the main attack was and they were unable to counterattack.<sup>77</sup> Thus, while Iraq exploited the advantages of time and position relatively well, it failed at achieving the initiative through the advantage of a surprise counterattack from shorter interior lines.

Air operations in this war were very much lopsided. The Iraqi Air Force presented no significant threat to the coalition. Without the use of its air force the Iraqis lacked the ability to protect their defenses and subsequently lost their freedom of action. Also, they lacked the intelligence air forces could provide. In short, the benefits of the defense -- particularly in the open desert environment -- were negated through the loss of air superiority. Saddam Hussein's only option was to counterattack or withdraw. To continue receiving massive aerial bombings only served to deplete his combat power, placing the balance of power increasingly in the coalition's favor.

Unlike his last war, Saddam Hussein was unable to successfully use the defense with all its theoretical advantages. With time an apparently formidable defense was built. The increased strength of the Iraqi defenses succeeded in

forcing the U.S. to increase its combat power. Even without air superiority, the Iraqis might have made more effective use of ground reconnaissance and drones to provide intelligence for a counterattack. Also, had they attacked within the third or fourth month, they might have inflicted the type of damage and casualties Saddam Hussein sought for negotiating purposes. What prevented the Iraqis from fighting, even though they had numerical superiority, lay in the moral domain. There was simply an absence of will, commitment, and courage throughout the Iraqi command structure and the soldiers lacked confidence and commitment. In short, the U.S.-led coalition's employment of overwhelming combat power caused the moral disintegration of the Iraqi Army.

#### KEY OBSERVATIONS OF DESERT STORM

- a. Air superiority was critical to freedom of action. Iraq was able to use the advantages of the defense during the Iran-Iraq war largely because it maintained air superiority. During Desert Storm, the U.S.-led coalition controlled the air space and was free to attack Iraqi defenses without significant losses.
- b. Airland Battle doctrine's focus on depth, agility, synchronization and initiative contributed to the U.S. success. However, we must temper such success with the understanding that Iraq's will to fight was destroyed by the air bombardment over an extended period of time.
- c. The deployment of U.S. troops was a great achievement.

We must, however, look very critically at our deployment doctrine for how it impacts on the way we execute our war-fighting doctrine. The two should complement each other, with emphasis on the tenants of Airland Battle doctrine. Rapid, synchronized deployment of combat power can reduce the defender's greatest advantage -- time.

d. The massing of overwhelming combat power at the decisive point to destroy the enemy center of gravity proved to be a fundamental principle. U.S. doctrine, however, lacks clarity on criteria for a center of gravity. As the definition stands in FM 100-5, Operations, a center of gravity can be anything. A possible solution is to narrow the definition of center of gravity and introduce into doctrine the Jominian concept of decisive point. A decisive point is a vulnerability, which if attacked, will contribute to the destruction of the enemy's "hub of all power", i.e. its center of gravity.

e. Continued development of operational art and the education of our leaders in it must continue. There were no indications that the Iraqi leaders understood or had any concept of operational art.

f. Operational level defensive doctrine needs to be developed within the context of contingency operations. U.S. forces entering an immature theater may not be capable of immediately conducting offensive operations. As a joint force, they must use the defense's advantages to buy time while the desired balance of forces can be generated.

g. Joint and combined operations became combat multipliers

when facing a nation which lacked similar ability.

h. While both sides had high technology weapons, it was superior leadership, C<sup>3</sup>I, and realistic training which proved decisive.

i. Intelligence is critical for maneuver warfare. Iraq's lack of an intelligence gathering capability negated the advantages of surprise and counterattack.

j. The autocratic and highly centralized Iraqi C<sup>2</sup> structure was a major vulnerability.

#### DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The decisive advantage accrued to either side stems not from superior technology, but rather a masterful implementation of technology with creative and resourceful doctrine and strategy...It is at the operational level of war...that the allied forces displayed a true mastery of the battlefield.<sup>78</sup>

The case studies demonstrated that Third World nations may attempt to secure their strategic aims in the international arena by using the defense to preserve their conquests and gain time. In general, the study reveals that regional aggressors may possess significant conventional forces but still suffer from numerous vulnerabilities. They lack the ability to translate strategic aims into viable military conditions and goals. They have no concept of the operational level of war and operational art. Their warfighting doctrine is generally suitable to meet their regional conditions, but not developed to meet the threat of a major power or coalition. Military professionalism, joint operations,

and highly centralized C<sup>3</sup>I are major deficiencies. With all their shortcomings, Third World nations pose significant challenges to U.S. operational commanders. The challenges will revolve around the advantages of the defense, the skill regional leaders, and their will to use it against U.S. forces.

U.S. Doctrine must have a global perspective focusing on regional crisis response.<sup>79</sup> Warfighting doctrine is developed against a type threat and a vision of how a nation's armed forces should fight. For years, our doctrine was oriented toward the Soviet threat of war on the European land mass. Focusing only on the Soviet threat is no longer practical in the new world order. While past strategy focused on the Soviet military threat to our national survival, future strategy should shift to incorporate the threat to U.S. economic survival versus containment of communism. The study reveals that regional wars, whether in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, or the Pacific may require some modification to current doctrine. There are a number of doctrinal implications which the case studies provide. The following observations and implications were drawn from the research.

1. Joint deployment doctrine should be reviewed. We should not expect our next opponent to give us five months to build up combat power. Doctrine should focus on rapid projection of force to deny the enemy the advantage of time.

2. Combined doctrine should be developed that incorporates Desert Storm observations. We should also increase the

numbers of combined staff and field training exercises.

3. Air superiority is essential to ensure operational freedom of action. Some initial observations on Desert Storm suggest that air power won the war. This is a very dangerous conclusion to draw. It is true that air power played a role in breaking the enemy's will to fight; however, the study also shows that Iraq's poor leadership, doctrine, and poor training level contributed to their own defeat. This observation may not be valid against a better-led, more aggressive foe, that takes better care of its forces. Also, precision guided bombs made up only 7 percent of the total U.S. ordnance dropped on Iraqi targets. Seventy percent of unguided bombs missed their targets.<sup>80</sup> The point made is not that the Air Force failed, rather, that their most significant contribution to the operation was in gaining air supremacy, which in turn gave the operational commander freedom of action. Joint air/land doctrine should focus air power toward achieving air superiority for the purpose of establishing operational freedom of action. Also, joint and combined air/land doctrine should be reviewed for better integration and interoperability.

4. Logistics at the operational level deserves a closer look since it makes operational art possible. Again time is the biggest enemy for the attacker and an ally to the defender.

5. The side with the superior intelligence system has a major advantage. Doctrine for intelligence analysis should

clearly define a hierarchical process of analysis. This analysis should begin its focus on enemy capabilities then, as the intelligence picture becomes clearer, progress to intentions. The IPB process serves as the foundation for intelligence analysis at the operational level. We should not react too quickly to criticism that Iraqi capabilities were overestimated or that Iraqi intentions were not predicted. It was the focus on the enemy's total capability which kept us from committing too early with too small a force. The fact that the Iraqis did not fight is not attributable to an intelligence failure but rather the result of the application of overwhelming combat power which caused their moral disintegration. The challenge is to develop intelligence doctrine geared to rapid situation development to support operational commanders responding to regional crises. Operational intelligence doctrine should also focus on better integrating army intelligence capabilities with those of other services, civilian agencies, and allies.

6. We should place greater emphasis on deception as a tool to deny the enemy intelligence and to assist in achieving surprise.

7. The importance of achieving overwhelming combat power has numerous doctrinal implications. First, joint deployment doctrine must provide clear guidance for rapid crisis planning. Tailoring of joint force packages should be explained in doctrine and taught at TRADOC schools. The moral impact of overwhelming force should be translated into doctrinal guidance and given greater attention during instruction on



operational art. The moral dissolution of the Argentines, the Iranians, and the Iraqis cost them the war.

In the three cases examined, the defender possessed the advantages of the defense and the combat power to implement an effective defensive strategy. Yet, in two cases the defender lost and the third produced victory in the form of a U.N. cease fire. This study concludes that strength of the defense lies within the moral domain of war. The moral factors of courage, determination, strength of mind, patriotic spirit, the commander's skill and will are -- according to Clausewitz -- among the most important in war.<sup>81</sup> In the three conflicts examined, the moral factor was decisive to the final outcome.

The implications to the U.S. operational commander are clear; he must seek to morally unbalance his opponent by the skillful integration of physical and moral means at his disposal. By unbalancing his opponent, the operational commander denies him freedom of action and reduces his will to resist. The final results will be the enemy's disintegration or the creation of conditions ripe for their disintegration through battle.<sup>82</sup>

In conclusion, the study highlights the difficulty of applying theory to practice -- particularly when the defense already presupposes weakness in the force adopting it. While the defense may, in the right hands and under the right circumstances, be the stronger form of war, wars are still

won by offensive action. Nonetheless, U.S. operational commanders will face formidable challenges for regional war. The implications drawn from the study suggest that a careful evaluation of current doctrine is required to ensure that U.S. forces have a viable doctrine to meet the challenges of the new world order.

While we should be proud of what we accomplished in Desert Storm, we have the professional responsibility to look at our performance critically and ask the hard questions. Victorious armies have tended to be the ones which learned the least from war. Let us not be guilty of following the example of past victors. American involvement in future wars will be to defend its worldwide interests rather than to contain communist expansion. This requires a warfighting doctrine centered on rapid joint force projection over great distances to immature theaters of war. The challenge is now to prepare for the next war instead of the last.

In light of this study's conclusion I recommend that TRADOC sponsor a Joint Regional Warfare Study. The purpose of this study would be to examine past regional conflicts where the U.S. or other nations projected force in response to regional crisis. Observations drawn from such a study should provide a major contribution towards determining joint doctrinal requirements of our armed forces to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

## ENDNOTES

1. Orenstein, Harold S., "Warsaw Pact Views on Trends in Ground Forces Tactics" International Defense Review, September 1989, p. 4.
2. Jomini, Antoine H., The Art of War. Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn, 1862, p. 169.
3. Clausewitz, Carl von, On War, Princeton University, NJ, 1976. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, p. 94.
4. Ibid., p. 392.
5. Ibid., p. 358.
6. Ibid., p. 368.
7. Handel, Michael I., ed., Clausewitz and Modern Strategy. Frank Cass & CO. Limited, Great Britain, 1986, p. 154.
8. Ibid., p. 155.
9. Clausewitz, Carl von, p. 358.
10. Ibid., p. 359.
11. Ibid., p. 379.
12. Ibid., p. 613.
13. Ibid., p. 613.
14. Clausewitz, Carl von, pp. 570-573 and Handel, pp. 70-71.
15. Clausewitz, Carl von, p. 573.
16. Ibid., p. 383.
17. Ibid., p. 365
18. Ibid., pp. 357-358.
19. Ibid., p. 379.
20. Ibid., p. 380.
21. Ibid., p. 386.
22. Ibid., p. 360.
23. Ibid., p. 361.

24. Ibid., p. 368.
25. Cordesman, Anthony H., and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of War, Volume III: The Afgan and Falklands Crisis. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1990, p. 240
26. Ibid., pp. 246-247.
27. Clausewitz, Carl von, On War, Princeton University, NJ, 1976. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, p. 379.
28. Brown, James, and William P. Snyder, ed., The Regionalization of Warfare: The Falkland/Malvinas Islands, Lebanon, and the Iran-Iraq Conflict. Transaction Books, New Brunswick, NJ, 1985, p. 26.
29. Cordesman and Wagner, pp. 253-254.
30. Ibid., p. 256.
31. McDonough, James, LTC., War in the Falklands: The Use and Misuse of Military Theory. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1987, p. 25.
32. Ibid., p. 25.
33. Cordesman and Wagner, pp. 303-306.
34. Ibid., p. 302.
35. Hastings, Max and Simon Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands. W.W. Norton & CO., NY, 1983, p. 223.
36. Cordesman and Wagner, pp. 306-307.
37. Ibid., p. 291.
38. Kinney, Francis, Major, The Malvinas Conflict: Argentine Practice of the Operational Art. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1990, p. 34.
39. Cordesman and Wagner, p. 285.
40. McDonough, p. 28.
41. Hastings and Jenkins, p. 324.
42. Cordesman and Wagner, p. 284.
43. Ibid., p. 238.
44. Cordesman, Anthony H., and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War, Volume II: The Iran-Iraq War. Westview

Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1990, p. 286.

45. Ibid., p. 11.

46. Ibid., pp. 11-43.

47. Ibid., p. 22.

48. Ibid., p. 30.

49. op. cit., pp. 32-33.

50. Cordesman and Wager, vol.II, pp. 135-137.

51. O'Ballance, Edgar, The Gulf War. Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Mclean, Vir., 1988, p. 148.

52. Cordesman and Wagner, Vol.II, pp. 149-150.

53. O'Ballance, pp. 101-102.

54. Ibid., p. 93.

55. Cordesman and Wagner, Vol. II, p. 198.

56. O'Ballance, pp. 152-153.

57. Cordesman and Wagner, Vol. II, p.199.

58. Ibid., p. 592.

59. Clausewitz, Carl von, p. 502.

60. Ibid., p. 204.

61. Ibid., p. 223.

62. O'Ballance, p. 163.

63. Ibid., p. 236.

64. Jupa, Richard and Jim Dinerman, How Iran Lost/Iraq Won the Gulf War. Ft. Leavenworth KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1991, p. 51.

65. Cordesman and Wager, Vol. II, p. 397.

66. Ibid., p. 248.

67. Ibid., p. 365.

68. O'Ballance, p. 101.

69. Ibid., p. 94.

70. Cordesman and Wagner, Vol. II, pp. 412-420.
71. Ibid., pp. 354-355.
72. Ibid., p. 152.
73. Ibid., p. 153.
74. Ibid., p. 395.
75. Summers, Harry, Col., "Victory Strategy." Military History, March, 1991, p. 8.
76. Jomini, p. 66.
77. Nelan, Bruce, "Kuwait is Liberated." Times, March, 11 1991, p. 1.
78. Grant, Greg, "Operational Art of War was Key to Allied Victory." Army Times, March 11, 1991, p. 25.
79. Butler, George, General, U.S. Military Strategy: The Role of American Armed Force in a Changing World Order. Directorate of Strategy, Plans, and Policy, JCS, Pentagon, Washington, D.C., March 6, 1991, p. 34.
80. Gellman, Barton, "70% of U.S. Bombs Missed Their Targets, Figures Show." Kansas City Star, March 16, 1991, p. A-15.
81. Clausewitz, pp. 134-186.
82. Hart, Liddell, B.H., Strategy, Praeger Publishers, New York, NY, 1967, pp. 338-344.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

Brown, James, and William P. Snyder, ed., The Regionalization of Warfare: The Falkland/Malvinas Islands, Lebanon, and the Iran-Iraq Conflict. Transaction Books, New Brunswick, NJ, 1985.

Berguist, Ronald E., Maj, The Role of Airpower in the Iran-Iraq War. Air University Press, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 1988.

Clausewitz, Carl von, On War, Princeton University, NJ, 1976. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret.

Cordesman, Anthony H., and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War, Volume II: The Iran-Iraq War. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1990.

Cordesman, Anthony H., and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of War, Volume III: The Afgan and Falklands Crisis. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1990.

Gamba, Virginia, The Falklands/Malvinas War; A Model for North-South Crisis Prevention. Allen & Unwin, Inc., Boston, MA., 1987.

Hart, Liddell, B.H., Strategy, Praeger Publishers, New York, NY, 1967.

Handel, Michael I., ed., Clausewitz and Modern Strategy. Frank Cass & CO. Limited, Great Britain, 1986.

Hastings, Max and Simon Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands. W.W. Norton & CO., NY, 1983.

Jomini, Antoine H., The Art of War. Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn, 1862.

Middlebrook, Martin, Operation Corporate; The Falklands War, 1982. Penguin Books LTD., London, 1987.

Neuman, Stephanie, G. and Robert e. Harkavy, ed. The Lessons of Recent Wars in the Third World, Volume II. Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass. 1987.

O'Ballance, Edgar, The Gulf War. Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Mclean, Vir., 1988.

Schneider, James, The Theory of Operational Art. School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS. 1988.

Turchenko, V., Defensive Operations During an Offensive. Army Foreign Science and Technology Center, Charlottesville, Va., 1974.

Watson, Bruce, W., and Peter Dunn, ed., Military Lessons of the Falklands War: Views from the United States. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1984.

#### Monographs

Cain, Francis M., Major, The Ardennes 1944: An Analysis of the Operational Defense. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1986.

Cranz, Donald, Major, Strongpoints in a Defense Against Blitzkrieg: Potential and Problems in Perspective. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1988.

Dunigan, John P. LTC., Strategic Mobility-Does the United States Have the Strategic Lift to Get to Our Next War and Remain for the Duration? Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1989.

Ellison, Gregory W. Major, Operational Art: The Missing Link in the Iran-Iraq War, Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1988.

Jupa, Richard and Jim Dingeman, How Iran Lost/Iraq Won the Gulf War. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1991.

Kinney, Francis, Major, The Malvinas Conflict: Argentine Practice of the Operational Art. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1990.

McDonough, James, LTC., War in the Falklands: The Use and Misuse of Military Theory. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1987.

Moss, Oliver, Major, Searching for the Stronger Form of War in the 20th Century: The Defense or the Offense. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1987.

Privratsky, Kenneth L., Major, British Combat Service Support on East Falklands: Considerations for Sustaining Tactical operations in Remote Areas. Ft. Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1985.

Moss, Oliver J., Major, Does Clausewitz's Defense Being the Stronger Form of War Remain True in Modern Warfare? Ft.



Leavenworth, KS., School of Advanced Military Studies, 1988.

Articles and Papers

Butler, George, General, U.S. Military Strategy: The Role of American Armed Force in a Changing World Order. Directorate of Strategy, Plans, and Policy, JCS, Pentagon, Washington, D.C., March 6, 1991.

Gellman, Barton, "70% of U.S. Bombs Missed Their Targets, Figures Show." Kansas City Star, March 16, 1991.

Grant, Greg, "Operational Art of War was Key to Allied Victory." Army Times, March 11, 1991.

Nelan, Bruce, "Kuwait is Liberated." Times, March 11, 1991.

Summers, Harry, Col., "Victory Strategy." Military History, March, 1991.